

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9517
INFO PAN CANAL
US SOUTHCOP

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 0239

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRN, PN
SUBJ: GOP PLANS SHIFT TO MICROWAVE COMMUNICATIONS
BETWEEN ALBROOK AND TOCUMEN AIRPORT TO REPLACE CABLE

1. AT MEETING HELD AT FAA OFFICE, CAPT. DIEGO HURTADO, CHIEF OF THE NAVIGATION DEPARTMENT OF PANAMA'S CIVIL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (DAC), STATED THAT DAC HAS FUNDS TO INSTALL 20 CHANNELS MICROWAVE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM FROM FAA'S AIRDROME CONTROL CENTER (ACC) TO TOCUMEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FOR USE OF FAA'S AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (ACT) SERVICE PROVIDED FOR THE PANAMA FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (FIR). THIS WOULD INVOLVE INSTALLATION OF MICROWAVE TERMINAL EQUIPMENT AT FAA ACC AND A REFLECTOR ON ANCON HILL BY DAC WHICH WOULD THEREAFTER BE MAINTAINED BY FAA. MAINTENANCE COSTS ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$10,000 PER YEAR. DAC IS NOW IN PROCESS OF PREPARING SPECIFICATIONS FOR EQUIPMENT. BIDS WILL BE SOLICITED ONLY FROM THREE AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS.

2. NEW MICROWAVE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM WOULD REPLACE THE OLD COMMUNICATIONS CABLE INSTALLED BETWEEN ALBROOK AIR FORCE BASE AND TOCUMEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PURSUANT TO THE AGREEMENT RELATING TO A COMMUNICATIONS CABLE EFFECTED BY EXCHANGE OF NOTES SIGNED AT PANAMA MARCH 31, 1949. THE ORIGINAL 15 YEAR PERIOD ESTABLISHED

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IN THIS AGREEMENT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY EXTENDED ANOTHER 10

YEARS UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT. THIS
EXTENSION WILL EXPIRE ON MARCH 31, 1974, BUT NEW
MICRO-WAVE INSTALLATION WILL NOT BE OPERATIVE UNTIL ABOUT
THE END OF THIS YEAR.

3. CAPT. HURTADO ASKED IF USG WOULD BE WILLING TO
EXTEND COMMUNICATIONS CABLE AGREEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
OF EXISITING CABLE FOR SUFFICIENT TIME TO PERMIT
INSTALLATION OF MICROWAVE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. HE INDICATED
DAC WOULD REQUEST FOREIGN MINISTRY TO PROPOSE FIVE YEAR
EXTENSION OF AGREEMENT.

4. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONAMONG PANCANAL, SOUTHCOM
AND FAA INDICATE NO PROBLEMS IN ACCEPTANCE OF
INSTALLATION OF MICROWAVE TERMINAL EQUIPMENT AT FAA ACC AND
COMMUNICATIONS REFLECTOR ON ANCON HILL, BUT MEETING
OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ABOVE ENTITIES WILL BE HELD ON
JANUARY 16 TO EXAMINE DAC'S PROPOSAL. PROVISION OF
NECESSAARY MAINTENACE OF MICROWAVE EQUIPMENT APPEARS
TO FALL WITHIN SCOPE OF SERVICES NECESSARY TO PROVIDE
ATC FOR PANAMA FIR UNDER AIR TRANSPORT SERVICES
AGREEMENT OF 1949 AND SUBSEQUENT EXCHANGE OF NOTES
APRIL 5 AND APRIL 10, 1959. HOWEVER, EXISTING
COMMUNICATIONS CABLE NOW LIES BURIED UNDER WIDENED PORTION
OF TRANS-ISTHMIAN HIGHWAY, AND IF CABLE'S CONDITION
HAS DETERIORATED OVER THE YEARS, MAINTENANCE COULD PROVE
TO BE A PROBLE. EMBASSY REQUESTS AUTHORITY TO
PROCEED WITH EXTENSION OF THE CABLE AGREEMENT FOR A MAXIMUM
PERIOD OF ONE YEAR, IF REQUESTED BY GOP.

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